

Zoo honors favorite Valentine poets

Urban Voices panel finds elementary school rhymesters

Some young poets are in our midst, already receiving recognition for their creativity.

Winners of the Valentine's Day Poetry Contest, in which students were asked to write about their favorite zoo animal, were honored at a special awards ceremony at the Turtle Back Zoo.

The contest, co-sponsored by Urban Voices and Turtle Back Zoo, was open to all Essex County pupils in grades two to five. The four top contestants were awarded U.S. Savings Bonds and certificates of appreciation by Urban Voices.

"The first annual Valentine's Day Poetry Contest has been a huge success and plans are already under way for next year's venture," said the organizers of the contest.

Winners were Tekesia Black, second grade, George Washington Carver School, Newark; Monica DeMaio, third grade, Grandview School, North Caldwell; Maritza Feliciano, fourth grade, Louise A. Spencer School, Newark; Ayanna Taylor, Holy Name School, East Orange; and Allison Radecki, second grade, Edgemont School, Montclair, who received the "Feelings" award for a poem about a Siberian tiger.

A junior membership in the Zoolog-

ical Society of New Jersey, a book, poster and certificates of appreciation were awarded the 24 contestants.

Also recognized were 10 students enrolled in a special education class at St. Patrick's School, Newark, who received posters and certificates of appreciation, while the school received a savings bond.

Created in 1980, Urban Voices is a coalition of poets and artists dedicated to promoting literature and art to people of all ages. The group runs art workshops and publishes anthologies of poetry and also works regularly with those in elementary and secondary schools, colleges, prisons and senior citizen community centers who are interested in the arts.

Prizes were contributed by the Carter G. Woodson Foundation, New Jersey Bell Telephone Co., Gibson Stapleton Associates, Mildred Rivera, Nina Robinson, John Clemmons, the Newark Public Library and the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs.

Here are the winning poems of Tekesia Black and Maritza Feliciano of Newark:

My Favorite Animal By Tekesia Black

I love Deers
Deers love me
Deers are beautiful
Can't you see.
Deers eat leaves off trees
Deers are brown, brown, like me
I love Deers.
Deers love me
Deers are gentle, kind and free
Deers are gentle just like me.

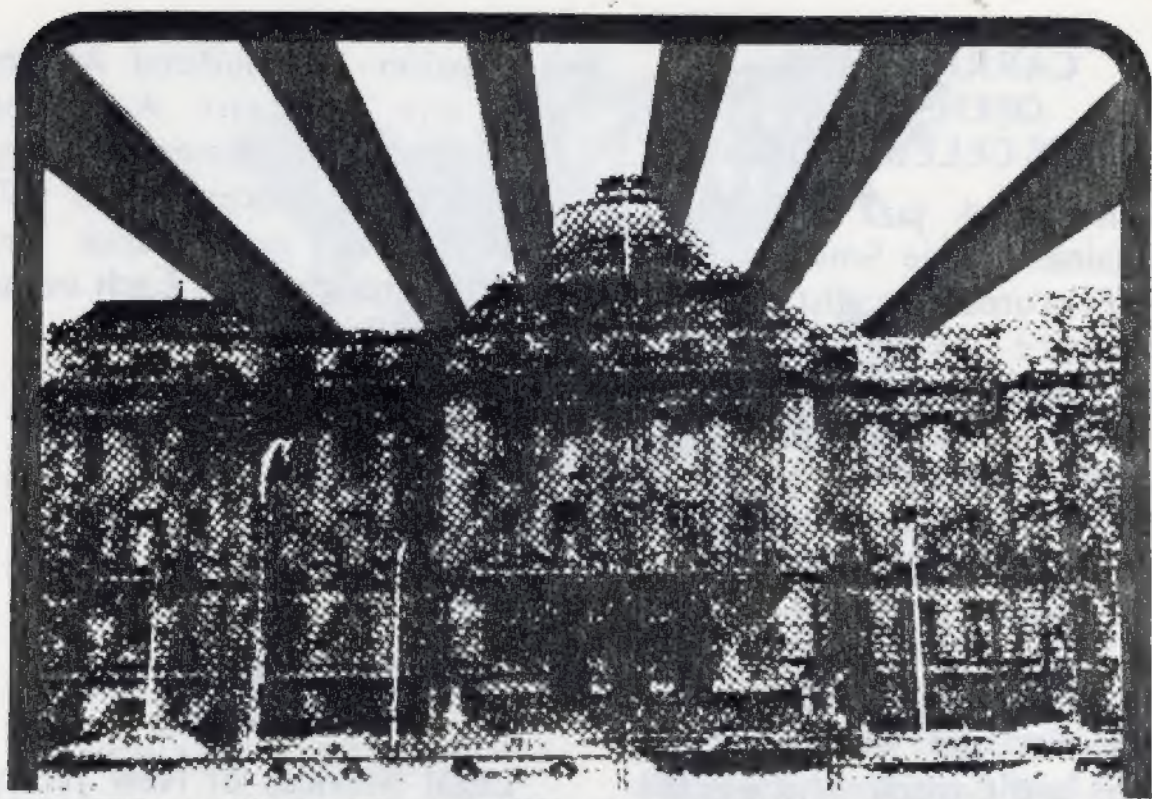
The Lizard By Maritza Feliciano

The lizard has a snaky head,
And a snaky tail beside.
He has a little lightning tongue
To snap at flies outside.
I think he was a dragon once
With wings and wicked claws
And fiery eyes, scales and teeth,
To make the bravest run.
I think a hero sought him out,
When he was in dragon skin.
He helped to fight an awful curse,
And changed to a lizard again.

Comparing notes are the winning poets of the Turtle Back Zoo contest, from left, Monica DeMaio of North Caldwell, Isiesha White of Newark, Allison Radecki of Montclair, Tsani-Jamillah Yarbrough of East Orange and Aaron Martin of Orange.

Photo by Vic Vepetto





WEDNESDAY NEWS BREAK

MAYOR'S OFFICE -- NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION SERVICES

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CARRIE CAPTURES NEWARK — Renowned jazz and blues entertainer Carrie Smith (center) greets Newark Councilman-at-Large Sharpe James (left), and the City's Director of Parks and Recreation Leonard Chavis during a press reception at the Newark Museum's Ballantine House, where she was feted in anticipation of her performance at Essex County College, Saturday, January 8 at 3 p.m. James and the City of Newark hosted the reception.

Story Inside

**CARRIE SMITH
OPENS 1983
ARTS CELEBRATION**

Renowned jazz and blues entertainer Carrie Smith will be the featured vocalist at the premiere performance of "Celebrating the Arts in 1983" at Essex County College on Saturday, January 8 at 3 p.m.

A Newark native, Ms. Smith made her concert debut as a gospel singer at Town Hall in New York City in 1961. Since then she has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Canada. She was the featured vocalist with the New York Jazz Repertory Company when they visited Russia with the "Music of Louis Armstrong." In 1980 Carrie Smith was invited to perform at the White House for President Jimmy Carter and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany.

Although her style is, at times, reminiscent of the legendary Bessie Smith, Carrie Smith's extraordinary talent also lends excitement to all the great songs of the twenties and thirties.

Appearing with her at Essex County College will be Aaron Bell, Milt Grayson and Buster Brown. Ms. Smith is scheduled to leave on a whirlwind tour of Europe shortly after her performance January 8.

"Celebrating the Arts in 1983" is co-sponsored by the Newark Department of Recreation and Parks, the Essex County Departments of Parks,

Recreation and Cultural Affairs and the Student Activities Department of Essex County College. The concert series will present one performance per month through May. Each event is free to the public.

**RESOURCE BOOKLETS
AVAILABLE**

Legal Services of New Jersey has published "Tenants' Rights in New Jersey," a handbook providing basic information regarding tenants' rights and responsibilities under New Jersey's landlord/tenant laws. It contains sections on what to do when moving into an apartment, security deposits, leases and how to get a landlord to make repairs. The handbook is available from the Legal Services of New Jersey, 78 New Street, New Brunswick, N.J. 08901 and costs \$1.00.

The New Jersey State Bar Association has a free directory of New Jersey attorneys who have indicated a special interest in representing women's rights issues and lists over 108 attorneys. It is intended to be used by attorneys, lawyer referral services, social service agencies and local women's organizations. For further information about the directory call 609-394-1101.



WHAT'S ON "NEWARK & REALITY"

The urban experience as expressed through poetry is this week's topic on "Newark & Reality" on Thursday, January 6 at 10:30 p.m. on Channel 9. When the term "urban" is mentioned it brings to mind pictures of slums, poor people, unemployment, crime and other dismal visions. Yet the explicit existence of urban problems have also served to stimulate the creative juices of artists, particularly poets.

Host Bernard Cannon Moore will discuss how poets view the urban experience and will be joined by poets Daphne Benyard, Myron Rodgers, Nina Robinson, James Brown, Anne Gadson Brown and Deborah Stapleton.

"The Urban Experience Expressed Through Poetry" will be repeated on Friday, Jan. 14 at 8:30 a.m. and Sunday, Jan. 16 at 7 a.m.

Next Wednesday, January 12 at 10:30 p.m. the topic will be "Newark Looking Ahead." Since Newark's beginning there have been plans for its development — plans that in many cases either overestimated the city's future potential or underestimated its future growth.

Host Janice Newman will be joined by Jewel Thompson, Director of the Newark Office of Planning and Grantsmanship, Alfred Faiella, Executive Director of the Newark Economic Development Corporation, and Dr. Martin Bierbaum, Professor of Urban Studies at Rutgers University. They will discuss why some past plans never came to fruition, some plans for the city's future development and potential problems facing cities that have become dependent on state and federal funding.

"Newark Looking Ahead" will be repeated on Friday, Jan. 21 at 8:30 a.m. and Sunday, Jan. 23 at 7 a.m.

TWO TONS OF FOOD DONATED BY CAROLE A. GRAVES CIVIC ORGANIZATION

In keeping with the holiday spirit of giving, the Carole A. Graves Civic Organization donated nearly 4,000 pounds of canned goods and other staple food items to Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity at St. Augustine Church and to the Newark Office of the Salvation Army last month.

Christine "Roz" Samuels, president of the organization, stated that the donation was "part of an on-going commitment by the organization to assist those in our city who need help the most."

In explaining the choice of beneficiaries for the food drive, Ms. Samuels noted that "during Mother Theresa's visit to Newark

a few years ago we all learned of her sacrifices and dedication to the most need among us, and we vowed to help out starting this year. Of course the Salvation Army has long been the last place of refuge to those in despair."

Ms. Samuels said that the canned goods and other foodstuffs had been collected during the last two months of 1982 at meetings of the organization and many bags and cartons of food gifts were delivered to the organization in early December at the Newark Teachers Union's monthly breakfast.

Additional contributions should be sent directly to the Salvation Army or to St. Augustine Church, or may be left at 30 Clinton Street, 4th floor, Newark.



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Center, Newark public Library staffer James Brown emcees "Urban Voices" brunch at Newark Museum Gardens. While Ann Gadson Brown, president of the Urban Voices, sings at the third annual brunch for the poetry club.

Saturday on the
Op-Ed page

Valentine

VALENTINE'S DAY poems are common this time of year, but one prize-winner was a bit unusual: It was a love poem to a Siberian tiger.

The poem was written by 7-year-old Allison Radecki of Montclair, one of the winners in a children's poetry contest co-sponsored by the Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange and Urban Voices, an Essex County group that promotes art and literature.

Allison's poem, one of more than 800 entries from Essex County children in Grades 2 through 5, was about Feelings, the tiger who was a favorite of children visiting the zoo and who died last summer.

Called "First Day," the verse began: "I remember his first day at the zoo, you would remember if you were there, too . . ." and ended with "

. . . "I wish I had one time to hug and kiss him. That was Feelings, the tiger, on his special day."

Yesterday, Allison, a second-grader, was to participate in a poetry reading and awards ceremony at the zoo's Education Center, along with other winners: Tekesia Black, a second-grader at George Washington Carver School in Newark; Monica DeMaio, a third-grader at Grandview School in North Caldwell; Maritza Feliciano, a fourth-grader at Louise A. Spencer School in Newark, and Ayanna Taylor, a fifth-grade student at Holy Name School in East Orange.

Another writer who will be honored is Elsie Thomas, 58, of Trenton, a women's studies student at Trenton State College, who wrote the winning essay — 1,000 were submitted in the

ESSEX JOURNAL

★★★

More than 105,000 readers

March 3, 1983

Do kids write poetry? You'd better know it! See?

By Kevin Kiddoo

"THE PANTHER is like a leopard", observed Ogden Nash, "Except it hasn't been peppered."

"Should you behold a panther crouch, Prepare to say Ouch."

"Better yet, if called by a panther, Don't anther."

Nash was a wonderful light poet who sugared and spiced his verse with atrocious puns — real groaners; the best kind — and other inventive word play. Throughout his opus a special place was held by animals; poems devoted to them were invariably short and crisply written, so that any peruser of an anthology for a quick fix of Nash knows that in "The Sea-Gull" or "The Centipede" he will find a thoroughly satisfying thumb-nail sketch of the beast in a dozen lines or less.

A similar poetic menagerie has recently been compiled under the auspices of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, of all people. Their Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange, in conjunction with a group of poets and artists called Urban Voices, sponsored a Valentine's Day Poetry Contest which was open to all students in the county in grades two through five. Over 800 entries were received, and the winners were announced during ceremonies February 19.

Some of the poems displayed a Nashian wit, and the chief inspirer of this seemed to be the zebra. Courtney Brooks, a second-grader at Our Lady of the Valley in Orange, observed this about his favorite creature:

The animal I like best of all,
Is the zebra standing so tall.
He seems to grow and grow,
His weight I do not know.
His colors black and white
Are really out of sight —
Especially at night.

And Monica DeMaio, a third grader at North Caldwell's Grandview School, also found amusement in her fascination with the zebra's stripes in the beginning to her poem:

There was a zebra whose name was Mac.

He had white stripes between the black.

Or maybe black between the white.

Did you ever see such a funny sight?

Other versifiers found imaginative ways to describe the animals they loved. Here's how Alexanra Kruse, a third-grader at St. Valentine's in Bloomfield, described the turtle:

Zoo turtles
go around without a sound.
They move so slow
you never know
if they're real.

When it's dark
they creep
and climb into their shell
and turn out the lights.

Kathryn Hayden, a fourth-grader at Maplewood's Our Lady of Sorrows, was moved to write this couplet as part of her poem about the colors of the peacock:

The peacock isn't very tall,
But the colors of its tail look
like leaves in the fall.

Some young writers concocted whole tales around



their favorites, such as fourth-grader Maritza Feeliciano of Newark's Louise A. Spencer school:

The lizard has a snaky head,
And a snaky tail beside.
He has a little lightning tongue
To snap at flies outside.

I think he was a dragon once
With wings and wicked claws
And fiery eyes, scales and teeth,
To make the bravest run.

I think a hero sought him out,
When he was in a dragon skin.
He helped to fight an awful curse,
And changed to a lizard again.

One poet, not content to champion a personal favorite, accounted for its superiority over the other possible choices as well — here's how Jennifer Attanasio, a fourth-grader at Nutley's Holy Name School, took on the animal kingdom on behalf of her beloved monkeys:

Monkeys make me laugh
Not the zebra or giraffe
Monkeys make me smile
Not the snake or crocodile

Monkeys are so funny
From branch to branch they jump
Not like the ugly rhino
Or the camel with his hump.

Monkeys seem so happy
Playing games and making noise
The zoo seems like a school yard
Filled with laughing girls and boys

See the monkey in the tree
Swinging by his tail so free
Oh how I wish that I could be
Like a monkey in a tree.

(Continued on Page 2)

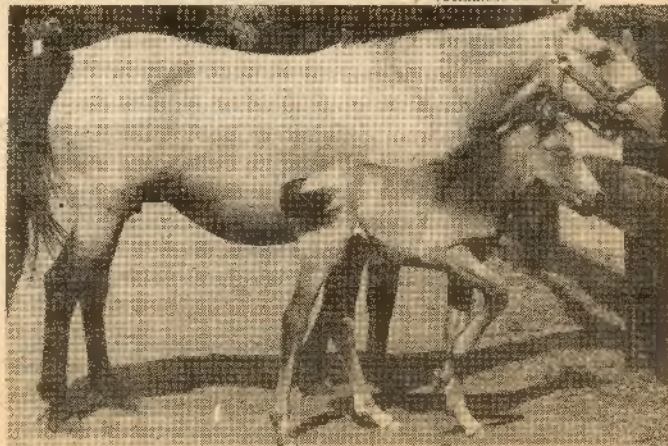


Photo by Don Cohen